

Excerpt from Stenographic Transcript of Hearings before the
Committee on Foreign Affairs - House of Representatives
Briefing on Current World Situation (Allen Dulles - cont'd)

Monday, February 3, 1959

Volume V

Mr. Coffin. I just want to ask a question not on anything that has been said -- we have covered thirty or forty countries, but what I am concerned with is the problem of keeping informed enough so as to be as useful as we can be.

A year ago I communicated with your organization to see if there was any material that could be made available on a periodic basis.

Well, this proved unworkable because you couldn't pull people off whatever else they were doing to accumulate the proper summaries for Congressional people. The only alternative was to assemble a series of radio broadcasts from different parts of the world and after about a week it was a choice of either I occupying my office or the radio broadcasts occupying them, so I cancelled my subscription.

This briefing, I think, has been useful and it will probably be more useful to those of us at this end of the table as we become a little bit more familiar with personalities and movements and countermovements in various parts of the world.

I know the demands on your organization and also the demands made on members of the committee, but I would like to think that we could have a systematic briefing more than at the onset of a Congressional year, or at the outbreak of a crisis, such as we had in the closing days last session.

I think this is worth thinking about and may be mutually advantageous, both for organization and to members of the committee who I think would be interested in getting such a run-down not too often, but every once in a while.

Mr. Dulles. I have had, sir, the same suggestion made from other quarters, and even today. I propose to present this in higher quarters in the Executive Branch to see what could be worked out. I think what you have said is entirely reasonable. It is not technically very easy to accomplish. However, I do feel something should be done about it.

I don't think it is adequate to get it a couple of times a year. The world is moving much faster than that and you have very great responsibilities here and several other committees of the Congress have these responsibilities and I realize it is not easy to carry them out without more information.

Up until last year the CIA has not generally done this type of briefing. It has been felt that was rather in the field of the State Department to give these briefings rather than CIA. Last year and this year so far I have been -- Mr. Amory and others have been doing more of this, but I think we ought to look and see and study very carefully on the Executive side, as to how it is possible to fulfill this need, which I think is a very real one and a very legitimate request that you have made.

Mr. Coffin. Thank you. I don't know for how many I speak, but I see some nodding their heads.

Mr. Zablocki. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Coffin. I yield.

Mr. Zablocki. That is probably the reason why so many of us in this committee have sponsored the resolution to form a joint committee on Central Intelligence, as we thought there was a lack of liaison between your agency, Mr. Dulles, and members of Congress.

Since there has been increased interest, I would move we have more meetings more often. Do you think that would satisfy the desires of Congress to have such a joint committee on Intelligence?

Mr. Dulles. Your problem would be having a committee of adequate size to meet the need. I don't quite know how it would be worked out. If you started to have a committee of both houses, most of the resolutions, certainly the one that Senator Mansfield has presented, proposed a committee that was pretty largely made up of members from the Appropriations and the Armed Services Committee. In the past it has been deemed that the CIA is subject to the Armed Services Committees. You would have to have a committee of very large size if it would meet the needs of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee and certain other committees.

Mr. Zablocki. The resolutions introduced in the House side included the Foreign Affairs Committee. Periodical reports from such a joint committee, however, would satisfy the members of Congress. Reports that are now not available because your agency does not have time to do it, but if we had adequate staff members and members who would naturally attend meetings and hear briefings, they could later present reports which would be of benefit to other members of Congress.

Mr. Dulles. I propose, as a result of my experience in the last few days, to make a report on this problem and see whether there is something that can be done. I am not sure whether the joint committee is the best solution, but I am openminded.

Chairman Morgan. Subcommittee 7 headed by our distinguished colleague, Congressman Hays, has "liaison with the Central Intelligence Agency" so we have that committee.

Mr. Hays. We have that liaison, but I don't know how much authority.